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NOTES ON ORIENTAL ANTIQUITIES.

TWO SEALS WITH PHŒNICIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

I. Among other small objects obtained by me in Baghdad, while with the Wolfe expedition, are two seals with Phœnician inscriptions which deserve publication. One of these (*fig. 16*) is a light carnelian, 2.3 centimetres long, and 0.9 cent. thick; and is pierced longitudinally with a small hole. It is engraved with more than usual care and skill, with diamond point.

Instead of the usual mythological figures, it represents a scene in life, the submission of captives to a conqueror. Before a man whom we will call the prince, bareheaded and clad in Persian gathered skirts or trousers,—such as we see on the Akhæmenian monuments of Persepolis, Nakhshi Rostum and Behistun,—is a captive, kneeling, with hands bound, and apparently a rope around his neck. Behind



FIG. 16.

the captive stands an officer with a short coat, round shield and spear. Behind the prince is a second captive, standing, with hands bound behind his back and a rope around his neck. The two prisoners are naked, except that they both have on what appears to be a Greek helmet, which is worn also by the officer. This style of helmet, however, occurs occasionally with the round shield in Assyrian art: see Botta's *Monuments*, T. II. pl. 147. In Layard's *Monuments*, 2d series, pl. 44, a foreign tribe is seen with a similar head-dress of feathers. The prince is bareheaded, although it was to be expected that he would have on a square cap or crown. The following inscription, in the Phœnician character, runs lengthwise on the cylinder: 𐤕 𐤁 𐤕 𐤕 or 𐤕𐤁𐤕. Between the last two letters, the 𐤕 and the 𐤕, there is what I take to be an original flaw in the stone, as it has the shape of no letter, and is not cut in outline, but appears to represent a bit flaked out. The inscription ought to carry the name of the owner, which should be prefixed by the possessive preposition 𐤍. It

is not easy to suppose that **נ** can take the place of **ל**, but the last three letters would seem to give the Jewish name *Nathan*. The cylinder may be of an age soon after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, as the Phœnician letters are of an early type.

II. Another carnelian seal (*fig. 17*), with a Phœnician inscription, is conoid in shape, with an oval cross-section like the ordinary Assyrian seal, and pierced near the apex. The larger diameter of the face is 1.8 centimetres, and the shorter is 1.3 cent. The height is 2.5 cent. This is one of the most perfect of its type I have ever seen. It is engraved on the face and on the two sides. On one side is the representation, so common on the Assyrian seals, of a worshipper, in a long tunic, standing before three of the peculiar and differing upright columns, or *asheras*, used for worship. One of these is surmounted by a crescent. On the other side is represented a man in a short military tunic, with a pointed cap or helmet, and with one arm



FIG. 17.

lifted vertically. Behind him is a human figure with the head of a lion, the god Nergal, perhaps, and with an arm similarly lifted. For the god Nergal, see Layard's *Monuments of Nineveh*, first series, pl. 82. The two figures do not apparently represent Merodach and Tiamat. Above them is the crescent. On the face is the representation of the divine triad, in which a smaller human head with one arm rises above each wing, on each side of the larger central head and bust. Beneath the divine emblem is a kneeling figure with both hands lifted, also two columns, or *asheras*, and the inscription (not reversed): **נִשְׁאָן** or **נִשְׁאָן**, apparently, the last letter being perhaps **ה** or **ו**. The characters are primitive, and the art probably belongs to the late Assyrian or the Akhæmenian Persian period. The divine triad is not a common object in Eastern art; a similar example is found in Lajard's *Culte de Mithra*, xxxiii, fig. 3, where again we have a Phœnician inscription.

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